

CONSTITUTION



ASSYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF VIRGIN MARY

644 PARAMUS ROAD
PARAMUS, NEW JERSEY



ADOPTED MAY 24, 1948
APPROVED JUNE 8, 1949
REVISED MARCH 14, 1971

Name

Address

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PREAMBLE

We the members of the Assyrian Orthodox Church of Virgin Mary, a religious corporation located in the Borough of Paramus, County of Bergen and State of New Jersey, acting under the authority of the Holy See of Antioch, located in Damascus, Syria, presently under the spiritual direction of His Holiness Mar Ignatus Jacob III Patriarch of Antioch, and all of the East, and his successors, in order to concentrate our efforts for maintaining this edifice and preserving it IN THE NAME OF THE LORD and for all within the Parish who possess the Orthodox faith and belief, and deeming it necessary to establish laws for the governing thereof; do therefore, adopt the following Constitution and By-Laws of the Assyrian Orthodox Church of Virgin Mary of Paramus, New Jersey.

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Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that s/he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if (s)he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

B Y - L A W S
ORDER OF BUSINESS
ARTICLE I

SECTION 1.

1. Roll Call
2. Reading of Minutes
3. Report of Treasurer
4. Report of the Priest
5. Report of Sunday School
6. Report of Building Committee
7. Report of Membership Committee
8. Report of Deacons Committee
9. Report of Regular and Special Committees
10. Unfinished Business
11. Report of Officers
12. New Business
13. Good and Welfare
14. Adjournment

SECTION 2. No business shall be taken up except in the order presented, unless on motion such irregularity be sanctioned by a majority of the trustees present.

SECTION 3. When a trustee is to make a motion or speak to the question, he shall rise and address the presiding officer, and the trustee must confine

himself strictly to the merits of the question under consideration, and he shall not be interrupted unless by a call or order, nor shall a trustee be allowed to speak twice on the same question until all who wish to speak have been heard.

SECTION 4. When two or more trustees rise at the same time the presiding officer shall decide who is to speak first.

SECTION 5. The majority rule shall prevail in all matters unless otherwise provided for.

SECTION 6. No hinderous and personal nature shall be discussed at any meeting.

SECTION 7. No member shall leave a meeting without permission from the presiding officer.

SECTION 8. No motion shall be received or laid before the meeting of the trustees unless moved by two members, nor opened for discussion until stated by the presiding officer — and when the question is laid before the trustees the priority of motions shall be as follows:

1. Motion to adjourn (undebatable).
2. Motion to lay on the table (undebatable).
3. Motion to raise a tabled matter (undebatable).
4. Motion to refer (debatable).
5. Motion to amend (debatable).
6. Ordinary motions.

SECTION 9. In the absence of a standing rule to apply to questions before the Board, recourse shall be had to Robert's Manual.

SECTION 10. Charges:

The minimum charges for church services such as Weddings, Baptismals, Funeral Services and Rental of Social Hall shall be set by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees and may be revised at any regular or special meeting in which a quorum is present upon motion duly made and seconded and passed by a majority vote.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name

SECTION 1. This body shall be known as The Assyrian Orthodox Church of Virgin Mary.

ARTICLE II

Membership

SECTION 1. Regular voting membership shall be open to adults 18 years or over who subscribe to the Eastern Orthodox Faith and Belief.

SECTION 2. A member shall be considered in good standing upon payment of his membership pledge within the calendar year in which it is made — said calendar year to run from January 1st. to December 31st. Such a member in good standing shall enjoy all the privileges of membership as defined by the Board of Trustees from time to time as circumstances warrant.

SECTION 3. Children of regular members 17 years old or younger shall be considered non voting members of this church.

SECTION 4. Regular members shall have the right to vote on all matters concerning the church at congregational meetings and shall be considered in good standing if their pledge for the previous calendar year has been paid in full.

SECTION 5. Regular members shall have the right to vote for members of the Board of Trustees at the annual elections and shall be considered in good standing if their pledge for the previous calendar year has been paid in full. Only a member in good standing shall be eligible to run for election as trustee.

SECTION 6. The minimum amount acceptable as an annual pledge shall be determined by the Board of Trustees at a regular or special meeting in which a quorum is present, by a majority vote and presented to a congregational meeting for ratification. If vetoed by the congregation, a compromise must be immediately effected between the congregational views and the Board of Trustees views until a figure satisfactory to both groups has been affected. For the purpose of setting the initial minimum amount, all members of the congregation present 18 years of age and over, shall be considered in good standing. Future changes in the amount of the minimum pledge are to be made by following the procedure outlined above except that only members in good standing may vote for or against ratification at congregational meetings. Donations to the church equal to or exceeding the minimum pledge fulfill requirements for regular voting membership.

SECTION 7. *Exceptions from Minimum Pledge*

(a) Widows and retired persons over 65 are exempted from amount set in minimum pledge and may determine the amount of their pledge themselves.

(b) Full time students and non-commissioned members of the Armed Forces may be excused, at their request, from making annual contributions and still remain in good standing as regular voting members.

(c) Hardship cases. Any member who feels that the minimum pledge will cause him undue hardship may appeal to a committee consisting of the President, Vice President and Treasurer who upon due consideration and a majority vote, may set a pledge lower than the minimum. Members whose pledge is determined by Article 7 shall be governed by the same regulations of good standing as all the other members of this church.

ARTICLE III

Representatives

SECTION 1. The Spiritual Leader.

Duties of the Priest

(A) It is the duty of the Priest to hold regular Sunday Services and on special Assyrian holiday services as they fall due.

(B) It is the duty of the Priest to contact and acquaint himself with Sunday School members and to help promote friendship and increase membership at all times.

(C) It is the duty of the Priest to visit the sick when notified, in metropolitan areas where Assyrians are members of our church and leave his card on all occasions whether it be sickness or a friendly visit and submit these names to the Trustees at their monthly meeting, and a record should be kept in a ledger of all visits made.

(D) It is the duty of the Priest to sign and deliver marriage certificates to members on the day of the ceremony.

(E) It is the duty of the Priest and the Board of Trustees to keep records of Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths. Such records shall be the property of the church and open for inspection by the request of any member of this church.

(F) It is the duty of the Priest to present himself when available at all Trustees meetings and to give a full report of activities, conditions, etc., regarding the advancements of the church.

ARTICLE IV

Board of Elders

SECTION 1. The Board of Elders shall consist of Past Presidents of the Board of Trustees who are no longer active members of the Board of Trustees. Outstanding members of the Parish in good standing may also be elected to the Board of Elders by the Board of Trustees through nomination by the President and a majority vote at a regular or special

meeting in which a quorum is present. The number of members will vary from time to time as new Past Presidents join or regular members are elected to the Board of Elders.

SECTION 2. Membership in the Board of Elders shall be for life except that any member may resign by submitting a written resignation to the President of the Board of Elders. The President of the Board of Elders shall be elected for a period of three years by a majority vote of the Board of Elders and may succeed himself if elected to subsequent terms.

SECTION 3. Any member of the Board of Elders elected to the Board of Trustees shall take a leave of absence from the Boards of Elders and resume his place on the Board of Elders after he is no longer serving on the Board of Trustees.

SECTION 4. The Board of Elders shall be an advisory body and it shall be its duty to convene when called upon to do so by the Board of Trustees to consider and advise on matters of vital import to the church. It may also convene on the initiative of its President to consider and present to the Board of Trustees, matters that it feels are vital to the welfare of the church. As an advisory Board, the Board of Elders has only such powers of Administration as the Board of Trustees shall choose to delegate to it from time to time on specific issues.

SECTION 5. The Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Board of Elders shall be elected for the period and in the manner outlined for the President in Section 2.

ARTICLE V

Officers and Trustees

SECTION 1. The Board of Trustees shall be the administrative and governing body of the Assyrian Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary. Members of the Board of Trustees are elected at the annual Trustee election to be held on Easter Sunday. All regular voting members of the Parish in good standing are eligible to vote at this election. Voting shall be conducted by an election committee appointed by the President of the Board of Trustees and shall be by sealed ballot. Candidates are selected by the standing Board or by a petition of any regular voting member in good standing signed by five other regular voting members in good standing (total six). Nominations for the election of the Board of Trustees must be completed two weeks before the election.

SECTION 2. No person shall hold office unless he has been a member in good standing for a period of one year. No member shall be eligible for nomination to the Board of Trustees who is not in good standing. A member will not be deemed to be in good standing if at the time of his nomination he has been in arrears of dues, pledges, or special assessments, payable three months prior thereto.

SECTION 3. The full Board of Trustees shall consist of not more than 18 members who shall be elected for a period of 3 years. Each $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Board

will have their term expire and will be replaced by the winning candidates of the annual election.

As soon as practicable after an election, the newly constituted Board of Trustees shall be convened by the President to elect a new slate of officers — President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Recording Secretary. This slate shall be elected to serve for a term of one year. Officers or members of the Board of Trustees may succeed themselves by running for office as outlined above. In the event a member of the Board of Trustees passes away or resigns, the President will nominate a regular voting member from the Parish to fill his unexpired term. This nominee must be approved by a majority of the Board of Trustees when a quorum is present at a regular or special meeting.

SECTION 4. Nominees for Board of Trustees must be present to accept the nomination or have a written acceptance of nomination in the hands of the Corresponding Secretary in time to be read at the meeting.

SECTION 5. The names of all candidates for Board of Trustees shall be printed on one ballot and the persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be elected.

SECTION 6. At the expiration of their term of office or on demand made at any time by the elective Trustees the retiring Trustees must turn over all property they have in their possession belonging to the church.

SECTION 7. (a) The Board of Trustees shall be permitted to increase or decrease the salary of the Priest.

(b) The Board of Trustees, with the Board of Elders, shall submit a petition to the congregation for the dismissal of the Priest due to negligence of his duties and report such petition to the Patriarch for his recommendations.

SECTION 8. The President shall devote his time to the welfare and the interest of the general work of the church. He shall preside at all meetings of the Board and maintain order. While presiding he shall have the deciding vote on questions of equal division. He shall sign the minutes of the meetings when they have been approved by the Board. He shall appoint all regular and special Committees, the Poor Committee, Sunday School Committee, Orphanage Committee, Building Committee, Membership Committee and Special Committees. He shall act as ex-officio on all committees and transact such other business as shall by right appertain to his office. He shall see that the funds of the church and of the Poor and Orphanage are properly accounted for as provided in this Constitution and By-Laws. He shall at all times exercise a general supervision over all officers and trustees and committees of this church and require a faithful and business-like performance of their duties. Should he become satisfied that any officer or any member of the Board has been guilty of negligence, dishonesty, or disloyalty to the church, he shall have authority to discharge such officer

from the official duties until the next meeting of the Board, at which time he shall state in full the reasons of such suspension, and the decision of the Board shall be final. He shall see that all claims and bills against the church are properly presented and itemized. He shall sign all checks, notes payable and documents as may be necessary and which appertain to the successful conduct of his office.

SECTION 9. The Vice-President shall take the place of the President in case of absence, resignation, disability or death of the President, and shall assume all the duties of the President to the end of the term.

SECTION 10. The Recording Secretary shall keep a true and correct record of all meetings of the Board in a book provided for that purpose. He shall record the names of the movers and seconders of all motions, and the result of all record votes, etc., and have his books at every meeting of the Board. All minutes must be on file open for inspection at all times.

SECTION 11. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the General Fund of the church; he shall deposit all funds in a bank which favors this church, and all funds shall be deposited in the name of the Assyrian Orthodox Church of Virgin Mary, incorporated in the State of New Jersey. He shall have the books of deposit balanced at the end of each calendar month, he shall keep an account of all money received and disbursed; he shall submit all his books and accounts to the Auditing Committee. He shall render monthly a complete statement of receipts and disbursements.

SECTION 12. The Corresponding Secretary shall carry on the official correspondence of the Board and act as the Secretary of the Priest in official capacity; read all correspondence received by him at each meeting, according to rotation and date. He shall keep a true and correct record of all Board meetings, including special, general, nomination and election meetings, and an indexed record of all its general rulings in books provided for that purpose. He shall use and keep securely the seal of the church, unless otherwise ordered.

ARTICLE VI

Committees

SECTION 1. All Committees shall be under the supervision and direction of the Board of Trustees, and any member of any committee who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without just cause to present himself with a prepared report, shall be removed and another appointed in his place by the President. The terms of all regular committees shall be one year.

SECTION 2. The Building Committee, consisting of two Trustees, shall take full charge of the build-

ings, collect rents in check or in cash, which must immediately be turned over to the Treasurer; look after the necessary repairs after notifying the President. If such repairs are approved by the President, they shall be made, providing the expense does not exceed \$10.00. They shall control the supply of oil and attend to the cleaning of the church and auditorium. They shall be notified of all special occasions, such as weddings, baptisms, funeral services, and the usual holidays, renting the auditorium and Memorial Hall for meetings of societies, etc., in order to keep accurate dates, and charge them according to the provisions made in the Constitution and By-Laws.

SECTION 3. The Sunday School Committee shall be composed of a Superintendent, the Priest and two of the Trustees appointed by the President. They shall be present in the Sunday School every Sunday. They shall supervise and find the best teachers in the congregation.

SECTION 4. The Membership Committee, consisting of two members of the Board, shall be appointed by the President. They shall have the membership Secretary's books examined at least every two months. They shall visit the delinquent members for payment and write up new members. All the money collected by them shall be turned over to the

membership Secretary for crediting the accounts of the members. They shall visit the friends of this church regardless of creed and denomination for the purpose of moral and financial support. If any grievances come to their notice among the flock against them, against the Priest, or against the Board of Trustees, they shall report to the President and prepare a written report to be presented in the regular meeting of the Board of that month.

SECTION 5. The Poor Committee shall consist of the Priest and two members of the Board, appointed by the President. Their duties shall be to be present in the church every Sunday. The duty of the Priest shall be to announce every other Sunday and on every holiday the need and the support of our poor, and to urge the congregation to contribute to the poor box or the poor plate while visiting the congregation, if a poor family or individual comes to the notice of the Priest, he shall immediately notify the rest of the Poor Committee for investigation. The committee shall have the authority to expend ten dollars (\$10.00) on any such case and if further financial assistance is required, the Poor Committee shall prepare a report in writing and present it at the regular meeting of that month for consideration. A recommendation shall be entered in every report of the Poor Committee. They shall open the poor box once a month in the presence of the President and the Priest and deposit same within 24 hours, into a savings account in a bank that favors this church. Withdrawals shall be made when necessary with the signature of the two committees and the President.

They shall have the books balanced at the end of each six months and keep a record of receipts from the poor box, etc., and disbursements. They shall submit all the books and accounts to the President in the regular meetings, in the month of October for examination.

SECTION 6. An Auditing Committee, consisting of the three members of the Board shall be appointed by the President at the first meeting in April. They shall serve for a period of one (1) year. The Auditing Committee shall examine the books of financial officers, such as the General Funds of the Church, Poor Committee's Fund, and Orphanage Plate Funds, etc. They shall examine the bank books at each auditing, and report to the Board the complete list of the total amount of money in each fund for each month of the quarterly period.

SECTION 7. *The Special Committee.* The President of the Board is empowered to appoint a committee for any and unforeseen local work, such as entertainments, outings and bazaars.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings

SECTION 1. All Special, General and Trustees' meetings must be held in the church auditorium or Memorial Hall when possible.

SECTION 2. At the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees in February, the President shall appoint two Judges of Election whose duties shall be to remain at the church auditorium together with the recording and Corresponding Secretary from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the day of election to receive ballots from such members in good standing. They shall compile the result of all votes cast, they shall report at the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees which will be held on the following meeting after the election, setting forth the total number of votes cast and the number of votes received by each candidate for Board of Trustees.

SECTION 3. Should the election of the Trustees result in a tie vote, new Board of Trustees will take secret vote for electing the new man.

SECTION 4. The Trustees shall hold their first meeting on the first Saturday or first Sunday within one week after notification of their election.

SECTION 5. There shall be a regular meeting of the Board at least once a month, unless other meeting dates are arranged for the convenience of the Board of Trustees.

SECTION 6. A Special or General Meeting of the entire membership may be called by the President, or by the Trustees. All members of this church must be notified by mail of such Special or General Meetings. No other business, except that for which the meeting was called, shall be transacted at any Special Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

Funds — Payments — Donations

SECTION 1. A General Fund shall be maintained by having placed to its credit all money received from dues, and other ordinary sources.

SECTION 2. All necessary expenses for the carrying on the Regular and General business of this church shall be paid from the General Fund.

SECTION 3. Money shall not be donated for any purpose, nor shall any contribution be made, unless the same has been acted on by the Board of Trustees in a Regular Meeting, and passed by three-fourths votes of the Board present.

SECTION 4. The funds of this church shall be entrusted in the custody of the Treasurer. They shall be deposited in such a bank favorable to this church, and in the name of the church.

SECTION 5. No money shall be expended or check drawn without a warrant signed by the President and Treasurer, except where payments are to be made, such as Priest's salary, taxes, interest on mortgages, if any, and minor expenses not exceeding the sum of \$5.00, unless passed on by a majority of the member of the Board present.

SECTION 6. No checks shall be drawn unless there is a balance in excess of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) at the bank.

SECTION 7. No property of this church shall be pledged or mortgaged without consent of congregation. First the Board of Elders should be notified and then a General Meeting of the entire congregation should be called especially for this purpose, and two-third vote of the members present shall rule.

ARTICLE IX

Amendments

SECTION 1. Amendments to the Constitution must be passed by the Board of Trustees by a 2/3 vote at a regular or special meeting in which a quorum is present. It must then be ratified by a majority vote at a congregational meeting.

SECTION 2. Any regular voting member in good standing may petition to amend the Constitution by submitting a petition signed by 9 other voting members in good standing to the Board of Trustees. The amendment must then follow the procedure outlined in Section 1 above.

*Revisions in Constitution of MAY 24, 1949 unan-
imously Ratified at Congregational Meeting of
MARCH 14, 1971. ALL CHANGES UNANIMOUS-
LY PASSED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AT
VARIOUS REGULAR MEETINGS PRIOR TO
MARCH 14, 1971.*

